

GENERAL NOTES

Flight speed of Common Loon (*Gavia immer*).—About a hundred miles up the St. Lawrence River from Montreal, Quebec, at 10 a.m., E.S.T., on October 20, 1950, I had a very favorable opportunity to check the speed of a flying Common Loon for a distance of about five miles. The bird was flying upstream, roughly southwest, possibly migrating, at a height of about four feet above the water. The highway I was driving along paralleled the river quite accurately, and I estimate that, despite the slight curves, the road's course did not exceed the bird's by more than 3 or 4 percent at most.

To keep abreast of the loon I had to increase my speedometer pace to very nearly 55 miles an hour, so that the bird, if it had a very slightly shorter course, was making good a "ground" speed of 53 miles an hour.

There was a cold and rather strong cross wind from the northwest—with a component against the bird. Mr. D. S. Ross, Acting Officer in Charge of the Montreal Airport (Dorval, P.Q.), informs me that over most of this area on October 20 winds were reported as about 25 m.p.h. at 30 feet, and he estimates that at four feet above an open water surface the most probable speed would have been 20 m.p.h. This agrees very closely with my observations at the time. The triangle of velocities is given in Figure 1. The direction of the vector AC

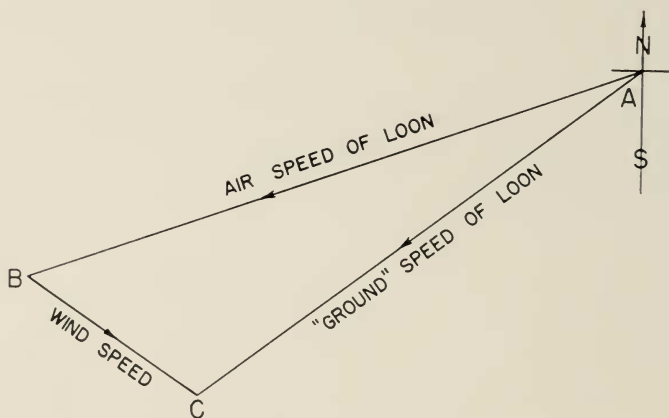


Fig. 1. Ground speed, combined with wind speed, to give air speed of flying Common Loon.

is that of the river, taken from a map. The vector BC is a combination of wind speed (from Mr. Ross's report) and wind direction (from my own observations). AB is the loon's air vector. The length of AB represents the bird's air speed, which comes out at about 62 m.p.h.—F. W. PRESTON, *Box 149, Butler, Pennsylvania*.

Present size of the Everglade Kite population at Lake Okeechobee, Florida.—Apropos of a statement in the report of the A.O.U. Committee on Bird Protection (1950. *Auk*, 67: 320) that the number of surviving Northern Everglade Kites (*Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus*) is not known, and also apropos of Sprunt's estimate (1950. *Audubon Magazine*, 52: